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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 005781

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/06/2012

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SUBJECT: UNRWA AND FAA 301(C) CONCERNS: PRM PDAS GREENE'S MEETING ON THE MARGINS OF UNRWA'S MAJOR DONORS MEETING

REF: A. JERUSALEM 2282

[B](#). JERUSALEM 3025

Classified By: DCM Greg Berry, per 1.5 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) In a September 24 meeting on the margins of the UNRWA Major Donors meeting (reported septel), PRM PDAS Richard Greene pressed UNRWA Commissioner General Peter Hansen, Deputy Commissioner General Karen AbuZayd, West Bank Director Richard Cook and Gaza Director Lionel Brisson on the need for UNRWA to do "everything in its power" to ensure terrorists do not benefit from UNRWA assistance programs. Specifically, he asked that UNRWA establish a more elaborate program to monitor and protect its installations and programs, including more regular inspections by international staff, increased staff training, institution of background checks on employees in the West Bank and Gaza, and severance of all ties to youth activities centers. Greene also briefed UNRWA senior management on pending legislation requiring a GAO review of State Department compliance with section 301(C) of the Foreign Assistance Act, noting that it would require the Secretary of State to provide an annual certification that

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U.S. law prohibiting the use of funds to support terrorism is being enforced to the fullest extent possible.

[1](#)2. (C) Hansen replied that although UNRWA cannot disagree with the goals outlined by Greene, there still is a question of how to reach common goals. Background checks, for example, are difficult as the PA currently is unable to provide basic security much less run criminal background checks on prospective UNRWA employees. Hansen added that UNRWA could not ask Israeli authorities to vet prospective UNRWA employees, as that could create the false impression that the agency and its employees are "collaborators." Noting that the Israeli government still had not responded to UNRWA's longstanding requests for information on employees detained by the Israeli authorities, Hansen speculated that the Israelis likely would be unwilling to work with UNRWA on enhanced staff security measures. Hansen added that, in spite of promises made by Danny Naveh, the Israelis never have shared specific information on alleged wrongdoing by UNRWA employees. (Comment: The Israelis seem instead to have shared the information with the USG, in the nonpaper discussed ref a.)

[1](#)3. (C) Nevertheless, Hansen reassured Greene that UNRWA was taking steps to ensure its programs and installations remain free from outside influences. UNRWA is working with Israel and the PA to ensure that the integrity of UN installations is respected in the current security environment. It also has stepped up efforts to ensure political material remains outside classrooms. And thanks to USG funding, UNRWA will soon have eight new international staff on board which will allow the agency to increase the frequency with which it monitors installations. West Bank Director Cook added that even without the new international staff, the West Bank field now requires that every UNRWA installation be checked by an international staff member once every three months. Cook noted that the previous inspection rate was once every six months.

[1](#)4. (C) In response to specific concerns raised by Greene, Deputy ComGen AbuZayd reported that UNRWA had severed all ties to youth activities centers "a decade ago," although some Gaza centers continued to be located "next to" UN facilities. (Note: In spite of AbuZayd's assertion, UNRWA'S 2002-3 budget includes plans to spend USD 289,000 in support of 27 youth activities centers in Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza.) West Bank Director Cook also clarified that, although certain UNRWA temporary employment programs in the West Bank are administered by local camp committees (ref b), UNRWA social workers and camp services officers vet beneficiary lists to ensure that beneficiaries are indeed registered refugees without a known history of terrorist activity. (Comment: Without an agreed-upon definition of what constitutes a terrorist, access to Israeli or PA-provided lists of known terrorists, or even its own security apparatus to make these determinations, UNRWA remains largely unable to vet beneficiary lists for anything other than its own needs-based criteria.)

15. (C) Comment and recommendation: Although UNRWA has taken some measures to remind staff of their obligations as international civil servants and to refine existing monitoring procedures, further steps should be taken to ensure that UNRWA has taken every possible measure to ensure beneficiaries have not engaged in acts of terrorism. Such steps should include: severance of all ties -- including financial support -- to youth activities centers; an agency-wide policy requiring some form of background checks on employees; an agency-wide policy requiring international staff to inspect every UNRWA installation at least once every three months; and some form of enhanced verification of agency beneficiaries' bona fides. We understand that the Department already is working on a formal request that UNRWA undertake such measures.

16. (C) Finally, we note that in order to better screen beneficiaries, UNRWA must have improved cooperation with Israeli authorities on security-related issues. We recommend the Department again urge Israeli authorities to share with UNRWA derogatory information on UNRWA employees and respond to UNRWA's long-standing request for information on employees detained by the Israelis. End comment and recommendation.

17. (U) PRM PDAS Greene cleared this message.

GNEHM